

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 15, 2018

Agenda Item: 2018-2019 Hunting Season Dates

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 Min

Background

Season dates are currently adopted biennially for all game species every other winter with proposals in December and final adoptions in February. These dates are a combination of fixed dates (mountain grouse season Sept. 1 opener) and “formula” dates (general deer and elk is defined by counting backwards five weeks from Thanksgiving Sunday). For the “formula” dates, there is an annual change with calendar rotation, which means at least one day’s difference and, periodically, nearly a full week. In some cases, these annual movements can place season dates in conflict with public expectations or traditions. Some specific areas have exceptions to these general statewide dates by species. Those exceptions are also proposed again for 2018 and 2019 or are proposed to be different within individual species-specific proposals.

Other than the proposed 4-day youth deer hunt, which the commission will act on separately, there are no proposed changes in date definitions from 2016-2017, and a table with the proposed 2018-2019 season dates is in the commission packet. The proposed 2018 two-day statewide youth deer hunting season scheduled during MEA days will not overlap the last Thursday and Friday of the statewide archery season and will occur on the Thursday and Friday of the week between archery and general seasons. However, the proposed youth hunt days for 2019 will overlap.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Public comment ran from Dec. 7 through Jan. 24, and we received 146 comments. Most spoke to wolf hunting near Yellowstone National Park. Few spoke to season dates other than many wanting shorter or no season on wolves.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2017 (status quo). If no change is adopted, that would result in seasons opening and closing on different weekdays (e.g. open on a Thursday rather than a Saturday).

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends the commission adopt the proposed season dates except for the youth deer hunt, which is addressed as a separate commission item.

Proposed Motion

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt the 2018 and 2019 Hunting Seasons Dates as proposed by FWP, except for the youth deer hunt, which is addressed in a separate proposal.